

Since Mass 2-1-1 was designated on March 13, 2020 by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Association (MEMA) as the official COVID-19 resource and referral line for residents, it has fielded more than 13,500 calls, approximately 1,500 calls per day, related to the crisis.

United Ways of Massachusetts are joining forces to help the citizens of Massachusetts have the resources necessary to stay well and safe during this health crisis by providing additional financial support to Mass 2-1-1 to help offset increased staffing needs. “People are increasingly distressed about the impact that the COVID-19 virus is having on their lives,” said Michael K. Durkin, President and Chief Executive Officer at United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley. “As we would expect, there is a high volume of callers inquiring about information and resources for unemployment, housing, childcare and food, among other concerns.”

Mass 2-1-1 has expanded hours and services to help meet the demand. Mass 2-1-1 is open statewide to callers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Callers will hear an automated menu of options to assist them with their inquiry. Operators fluent in Spanish are available, and more than 150 other languages are supported through an interpreter services line that is available 24/7.

DPH has also fortified Mass 2-1-1 with additional staff, including two epidemiologists who are available to answer health related questions about COVID-19. Residents who place non-emergency calls to Mass 2-1-1 can get real-time information, resources, and referrals about COVID-19, such as:

- COVID-19 prevention, symptoms, and treatment
- Information about testing
- Guidance for people planning or returning from travel

Residents can also search for information or reach 2-1-1 through a live chat option on the [Mass 2-1-1 website](https://www.mass211.org) – simply visit [mass211.org](https://www.mass211.org).

Mass 2-1-1 was created in 2006 to provide information and referrals for health and human services to all Massachusetts residents. In 2019, Mass 2-1-1 received 151,389 calls and had 92,279 web queries from residents of the Commonwealth seeking assistance. This free service is made available through funding from three State Departments, EOHHS, EEC, and MEMA, who contract Mass 2-1-1 to be their official 24-hour call line, as well as funding from 19 local United Ways across the state, including United Ways of Tri-County, Pioneer Valley, North Central, Berkshire, Northern Berkshire, Cape and Islands, Acton-Boxborough, Franklin County, Greater Fall River, Greater New Bedford, Greater Plymouth County, Hampshire County, Southbridge, Sturbridge & Charlton, and Webster and Dudley, along with United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley and United Way of Central Massachusetts.